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THE SOUTH CAROLINA FEDERALISTS, I.

ORIGINAL material for Southern history has been so scarce at the centres where American historiographers have worked, that the general writers have had to substitute conjecture for understanding in many cases when attempting to interpret Southern developments. The Federalists of the South have suffered particularly from misrepresentation and neglect. Their Democratic-Republican contemporaries of course abused them; the American public at large in the following generation was scandalized by the course of the New England Federalists, and placed a stigma upon all who bore or had borne the name of Federalists anywhere; no historical monographs have made the pertinent data available; and the standard historians, with the exception of Henry Adams, who has indicated a sound interpretation in the form of conjecture but who has given no data, have failed to handle the theme with any approach to adequacy. The South Carolina group appears to have been typical of the whole Southern wing of the Federalists; and because of the greater fullness of the extant documents and the more apparent unity of the theme, the present essay will treat of the origin, character and early career of the party in the state where it was most prominent, rather than in the Southern region at large.

South Carolina has always been in large degree a community apart from the rest of the United States. The long isolation of the colony upon an exposed frontier, and the centralization of commercial, social and political life by reason of the great importance of the city of Charleston, had given the commonwealth a remarkable sentiment of compactness and self-reliance. In the whole period from the Revolution to the Civil War the tendency of public opinion generally prevailing was to regard the membership of their state in the Federal Union as merely providing a more or less intimate alliance of the states, as mutual convenience might require. The stress of somewhat abnormal conditions, however, led many prominent men in the state to favor strong powers for the federal government throughout the period from 1786 to the time of the "second war for American independence", in 1812-1815.

In the internal politics of South Carolina, an aristocracy composed of the planters and the leading Charleston merchants was

generally in control of the state government, but was in chronic dread of defeat at the ballot-boxes. In the opposition there was a body of clerks, artisans and other white laborers in Charleston, much inclined at times to assert democratic doctrine, and there was a large population of farmers in the distant uplands, non-slaveholding in the eighteenth century, disposed to co-operate with the submerged Charleston democracy on occasion, but rendered partly helpless by a lack of leaders and organization. The control by the planters, furthermore, was safeguarded by a constitutional gerrymander which gave their districts (the lowlands) a more than proportionate representation in the legislature; and this advantage was jealously guarded by the planters, who feared unsympathetic administration, if no worse, by the democracy. The planters were large producers on a capitalistic basis, analogous to factory owners of more recent times, and often they operated on credit. They were generally disposed to be conservative in business, anxious to keep their credit good and to maintain friendly relations with the commercial powers.¹ In addition, these men, who were residents among and rulers of a dense negro population, could not afford to accept and propagate such socially disturbing ideas as the doctrine of the inherent freedom and equality of men. The danger of fomenting servile discontent was too great.

In most of its problems except where the negroes were concerned the South Carolina ruling class found its interests to be harmonious with those of the Northern sea-board; and the problems of negroes and slavery furnished no overt issues in that period which could not be speedily patched up. The more obvious problems before the whole country were such as to promote little antagonism between North and South. All states and sections had similar tasks of rehabilitation after the war, similar needs of establishing an effective central government, similar difficulties of finance and commerce, similar danger from the French agitation in the Genet period, similar problems in general of maintaining a suitable equilibrium between social compactness and personal liberty and between national unity and local self-government. In nearly all the ques-

¹ The importance of commercial relations to the plantation interests may be gathered from the statistics of exports. For example, in 1791 the exports of South Carolina were valued at 2.9 million dollars, as compared with 3.8 from Pennsylvania, 3.5 from Virginia, 2.9 from Massachusetts and 2.5 from Maryland. In 1800 they were, from South Carolina 10.6 million dollars, from New York 14, from Maryland 12, from Pennsylvania 12, from Massachusetts 11.3, from Virginia 4.4.

tions of the period the issues lay between classes of people differentiated by temperament, occupation and property-holding, rather than between sections antagonized by the pressure of conflicting geographical conditions and needs. The temperament of the South in general was more impulsive than that of the North, and therefore its views were likely to be the more democratic in that period of democratic agitation; but there were many reasons why the dominant class in a state like South Carolina should keep firm hold upon its emotions. The traditions of the South, too, laid greater stress upon individualism and local autonomy; but the special needs of the period counteracted this tendency also among a large element who wanted most a stable régime and leaned toward constructive policy.

As in many other cases in American history, the first phase in South Carolina party development in the Federalist period was the rise of local factions differing over local issues. Each of these provided itself with more or less definite party machinery, and attracted to its membership the persons of appropriate economic interests, social affiliations and personal points of view. Finally each of the local parties sought alliance with parties in other states in the Union, with a view to exerting influence upon the common federal government.

A beginning of the Federalist frame of mind may be seen as early as the movement of revolt from Great Britain. This movement in South Carolina was controlled by the aristocracy, and had little concern with the doctrine of natural rights. It was merely a demand for home-rule, with few appeals to theory of any sort. It was, furthermore, a movement for home-rule in Anglo-America as a whole, and not for the independence of the separate commonwealth of South Carolina. As an illustration of this, Christopher Gadsden, whose work of leadership in South Carolina corresponds to that of Samuel Adams in Massachusetts, wrote as early as 1765, "There ought to be no New England men, no New Yorkers, etc., known on the Continent, but all of us Americans."² Gadsden, furthermore, was so conspicuously aristocratic in his general attitude that he was charged by a leading Democrat in 1783 with having originated "nabobism" in Charleston.³ As might be expected accordingly, the experience of this commonwealth during the whole

² Letter of Christopher Gadsden, Charleston, December 2, 1765, to Charles Garth, agent of the colony of South Carolina at London. R. W. Gibbes, *Documentary History of the American Revolution, chiefly in South Carolina, 1764-1776*, p. 8.

³ Letter of Alexander Gillon, *South Carolina Gazette*, September 9, 1783.

revolutionary period failed to emphasize either democratic theory or state-rights doctrine⁴ as much as did the agitations in numerous other states.

The divergence of parties upon local issues began during the war, if not before. The stress of the war times was extremely severe. The capture of Savannah in 1778 and of Charleston at the beginning of 1780 enabled the British forces to overrun the whole countryside and lay waste large tracts as far distant as the middle of the Piedmont region. Some of the inhabitants opposed the invaders by enlisting in the Continental army, and some by serving in partisan bands under Marion, Pickens and Sumter. Others came out openly as loyalists, giving aid to the British. Finally, a number of well-to-do citizens of the Charleston district, after experiencing for some months the distresses of invasive war, discouraged at the gloomy local prospects, and believing now that the country was grasping at the shadow of liberty and losing the substance of prosperity and happiness,⁵ ceased their more or less active assistance to the "patriot" cause, accepted protection from General Cornwallis, and assumed neutral status.⁶ In January, 1782, the state legislature in its session at Jacksonborough, while the British still held Charleston, passed acts confiscating the property of loyalists and amercing a number of citizens listed as having accepted British protection and having deserted the American cause. This led to much subsequent controversy.⁷

At the close of the war, the country lay devastated, the field-gangs and equipment of plantations were depleted, markets impaired, and the British bounty lost which had sustained the indigo industry. Worse than all this, the body politic was torn by factional

⁴ W. H. Drayton, it is true, in 1778 denounced the Articles of Confederation, then before the state for ratification, on the ground that they would strip the several states of powers with which they could not safely part and would create a central government of enormous and dreadful powers Niles, *Principles and Acts of the Revolution*, pp. 98-115; Tyler, *Literary History of the American Revolution*, I. 491, 493. But this fantastic apprehension held by Drayton shortly before his death seems to have been sporadic and to have made no lasting impression unless upon a few men like Rawlins Lowndes, mentioned below.

⁵ E. g., the case of Rawlins Lowndes as explained by Judge Pendleton in the *Charleston Evening Gazette*, October 27, 1785. See also, letter of Ralph Izard, April 27, 1784, to Thomas Jefferson, in the *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, II. 194, 195.

⁶ For treatment of this general theme, see McCrady, *History of South Carolina in the Revolution*, *passim*.

⁷ For a belated statement of considerations operating *pro* and *contra* in the debates at Jacksonborough, see the discussion in the Assembly, February 21, 1787, reported in the *Charleston Morning Post*, February 22, 1787.

spirit, and the leaders of opinion, though somewhat dazed by the magnitude and complexity of the problems to be handled, began clamoring in support of a great diversity of policies.

The first issue was upon the treatment of loyalists and other obnoxious persons. Most of the substantial citizens favored such toleration for these as the British treaty required; but a group of radicals undertook, without the formality of law, to administer discipline to selected persons, and to drive them from the state. It was doubtful for a twelvemonth whether mob law or statute law would prevail. Judge Ædanus Burke in his charge to the grand jury at Charleston, June 9, 1783, expressed fears that the people, rendered boisterous by the war times, might turn against one another in factions. Four men, said he, had been killed in Charleston since the British army departed, and numerous others in the country. He deplored the retaliatory spirit, tending to beget feuds and factions, and he urged the grand jury to take steps to crush all violence.⁸ In spite of this, a number of men gathered on the evening of July 10, whether as a mob or as an organized company, and "pumped" four or five persons whom they thought obnoxious to the state.⁹ Next day a number of men of official status, principally members of the legislature, waited upon the governor and asked him to safeguard the good name of the city and state by suppressing this spirit of violence. The governor at once issued a proclamation denouncing the disorder, declaring that future breaches of the peace would be punished, and appealing to the judges, peace officers and all good citizens to aid in discouraging conduct of such alarming tendency.¹⁰

Order was restored by this measure; but the spirit of persecution still lived, to break out again in the following year. Meanwhile the men who most strongly cherished this hostility organized themselves as a force to be reckoned with. The prime mover in this appears to have been Alexander Gillon, a Charleston merchant who had been commissioned as commodore by the state of South Carolina in 1780 and sent abroad to obtain and operate a navy for the state. His achievement then was to hire a frigate from the Duke of Luxemburg, to equip it with a French crew, and send it out, after months of delay, to prey upon the British merchant marine. This frigate was soon captured by the British navy, and its cost added a very large item to South Carolina's Revolutionary debt.

⁸ *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, June 10, 1783.

⁹ *Ibid.*, July 12, 1783.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Gillon saw no maritime service, but remained a titular commodore. His principal colleague in the leadership of the Charleston radicals was Dr. James Fallon. Their followers appear to have been mostly of the city's unpropertied class.

There was at this time a club in Charleston named the Smoking Society, of a convivial character, or as said by its critics, bacchanalian. Gillon and Fallon had themselves made president and secretary respectively of this club, changed its name to the "Marine Anti-Britannic Society", and devoted it to the championship of radical causes in politics.¹¹ An indication of the strength of the faction which he headed lies in Gillon's election by the Privy Council to the lieutenant-governorship of the state, August 22, 1783,¹² just a month after the "pumping" episode. This action by the Council may have been due to its having a majority of radicals among its members, or perhaps as probably to the desire of the conservatives to pacify the radicals by placing their leader in a position of dignity but of harmlessness in the administration. That Fallon also was zealously active is shown by a letter in the *Georgia Gazette*, October 16, 1783, written by a Georgian signing himself "Mentor" and apologizing for his interference by saying, "I cannot be happy when a sister state is fomented by intestine broils". The writer warned the people of Charleston against Fallon as a demagogue and against the anarchy which mob action would bring: "The common people of Charleston, though liable to be misled, are still open to conviction. . . . Tell them", he urged upon the leading men of the city, "that the advantages resulting from the preservation of government are Freedom, Unanimity, Commerce, and National Reputation; point out to them that the damnable evils which eternally spring from the anarchy they have aimed at are Suspicion, Dissension, Poverty, Disgrace, and Dissolution".

One of the Charleston papers printed in September a memorial of citizens of Northumberland County, Virginia, urging conservatism in public policy, liberal treatment towards foreigners, the refraining by public officers from the abuse of their powers, and the general toning up of political morality and manners.¹³ Aside from

¹¹ Announcement of the annual dinner of the society to commemorate the evacuation of Charleston by the British on December 14, 1842. *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, November 27, 1783. Letter signed "Another Patriot", *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, May 8 to 11, 1784.

¹² *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, August 23, 1783.

¹³ Memorial by 69 inhabitants of Northumberland County to their delegates in the Virginia Assembly, June 10, 1783. *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, September 16 to 20, 1783.

this, little argument for conservatism appeared in the Charleston press during the autumn of 1783. The radicals were more active, but the quarrel died down in winter, to flare up again in the spring. Ralph Izard wrote Thomas Jefferson from his plantation near Charleston, April 27, 1784: "Would to God I could say that tranquility was perfectly restored in this State. Dissensions and factions still exist, and like the Hydra, when one head is destroyed, another arises."¹⁴

At this time the dissension was in full blast again; and the issue was more clear-cut than before. Each faction had acquired one of the daily newspapers as its organ. In the early spring the Marine Anti-Britannic Society adopted resolutions, described by its opponents as ridiculous and pompous jargon, and requested each of the gazettes of the city to publish them. Mrs. Timothy, who owned the *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, gave them due publication; but John Miller, publisher of the *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, who was also state printer, "in terms very preemptory and disrespectful, refused to give any place in his gazette to the society's resolutions, evidencing thereby, as well as by some former acts of his toward the said Society, that his Press is not thoroughly uninfluenced and free". The society therefore resolved unanimously to boycott Miller's journal as regarded both subscriptions and advertisements.¹⁵

The Anti-Britannics now resorted to an attempt at terrorism. About the middle of April they posted handbills in Charleston listing eleven persons, either loyalists or recent immigrants, and giving them notice to quit the state within ten days. About the same time they or their allies did violence to the person of a Mr. Rees in the interior of the state; and Mrs. Timothy's paper published reports, apparently false, of similar lynch-law punishments inflicted upon other persons. In denouncing these proceedings, a citizen writing under the anonym "Another Patriot", in the *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, April 28, expressed the hope that persons about to sail from Charleston for Europe would not take the handbills too seriously nor spread lurid reports of them abroad, to add to the damage done the state by the reports of the "pumping match" of the previous year. He assured them that an association of the good citizens was being formed, resolutely determined to

¹⁴ *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, II. 194.

¹⁵ Preamble and resolutions printed in the *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, April 8, 1784.

uphold the magistracy and to put it out of the power of malcontents to disturb the peace of the city.

The city council resolved on April 30 that in order to secure the suppression of any riots which might occur, the bell of St. Michael's church should be rung in case of turbulence, whereupon the intendant and wardens should at once repair to the state-house; and it commanded that all magistrates and constables, with their emblems of office, and all regular and peaceable citizens should rally likewise at the state-house and "invigorate the arm of Government".¹⁶ This riot ordinance seems to have turned the tide against the Anti-Britannics. The writer "Another Patriot" declared in Miller's paper of May 11, that most of those who had been followers of Gillon and Fallon had joined the society in the belief, fostered by its officers, that it would advantage them in their trades; but that these had at length seen through the cheat, and that at a recent meeting only thirty-nine members could be assembled out of the six hundred of which the society's hand-bills had boasted.¹⁷ This exposure was shortly followed by ridicule. A citizen calling himself "A Steady and Open Republican", in a long article denouncing Fallon, turned upon the society:¹⁸

Carolina, that has not twenty of her natives at sea, immediately to set up an Anti-Britannic Marine Society! Laughable indeed! If intended to raise a Navy, that is expressly contrary to the Confederation, and I confess the very thought of such a thing gives me the gripes, before we recover from the endless expences and embarrassments of the wretched bargain made for us only in the *bare hire* of one single Frigate.

Several anonymous radicals replied,¹⁹ and a running controversy was kept up in the gazettes from May to September. There was apparently for some years no further attempt at mob action;²⁰ the radicals turned their attention instead to getting control of the government through polling majorities in the elections. Of this and the outcome, John Lloyd wrote from Charleston, December 7, 1784, to his nephew, T. B. Smith:²¹

¹⁶ *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, May 1, 1784.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, May 11, 1784.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, May 13, 1784.

¹⁹ One of these was driven to reveal himself as William Hornby.

²⁰ E. g., M. Petrie wrote from Charleston, May 18, 1792, to Gabriel Manigault, Goose Creek, S. C.: "M. de Kereado has taken passage in Garman, just arrived. He is very right to leave this town, full of discord. Threatenings of raising the mob against some lately arrived have succeeded to the *impuissance* of raising or getting the Law against them." MS. in possession of Mrs. Hawkins Jenkins, Pinopolis, S. C.

²¹ MS. in the Charleston Library.

The malecontented party having by several publications endeavoured to influence the electors throughout the State to make choice of men to represent them in the General Assembly, from the lower class: the gentlemen of property, to preserve their necessary consequence in the community and in order to prevent anarchy and confusion, have almost unanimously exerted themselves in opposition to them, and it is with particular pleasure I inform you they have pretty generally carried their point, especially in this city, so that we shall have exceedingly good representation, and by that means support the honor and credit of the country.

Antagonism to the aristocracy, however, was strong, particularly in the upland districts, where the cotton industry did not yet exist and a small-farming régime prevailed. Izard wrote to Jefferson, June 10, 1785: "Our governments tend too much to Democracy. A handicraftsman thinks an apprenticeship necessary to make him acquainted with his business. But our back countrymen are of opinion that a politician may be born such, as well as a poet."²²

The governor gave notice on March 17, 1785, that all persons who had been exiled from sister states and had taken refuge in South Carolina must leave the state within one month from the date of this notice; and that all persons who had been banished from South Carolina and had returned thither under the provisions of the British treaty, might remain in the state for three months longer than the treaty stipulated, but must depart immediately at the end of that period.²³ This action by the executive put an end to the anti-loyalist agitation; but the parties already in process of evolution continued to develop and to oppose one another upon successive new issues.

The prevalence of acute hard times, reaching extreme severity in 1785 and 1786, turned public attention sharply to questions of industry, commerce and finance. A narrative of economic developments in the state following the close of the British war was related by Judge Henry Pendleton in his charges to the grand juries of Georgetown, Cheraws and Camden Districts, in the autumn of 1786, in part as follows:²⁴

No sooner had we recovered and restored the country to peace and order than a rage for running into debt became epidemical; instead of resorting to patient industry, and by slow and cautious advances, recovering to the state that opulence and vigor which the devastations

²² *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, II. 197.

²³ *Gazette of the State of South Carolina*, March 21, 1785.

²⁴ *Charleston Morning Post*, December 13, 1786. Practically the same narrative is given as a preface to an argument for the repeal of the "stay laws", in a letter signed "Appius", addressed to the General Assembly, and printed in the *Charleston Morning Post*, February 15 and 16, 1787.

of a long and calamitous war had destroyed, individuals were for getting rich by a *coup de main*, a good bargain—a happy speculation was almost every man's object and pursuit. Instead of a rigid economy, which the distress of the times so strongly excited, what a load of debt was in a short time contracted in the purchase of British superfluities, and of lands and slaves for which no price was too high, if credit for the purchase was to be obtained; these fatal effects too were accelerated by the very indulgence and lenity which afforded the happiest opportunity to those in debt to surmount all their difficulties—I mean the act for prescribing the payment of old debts by instalments of one, two and three years; had this act totally abolished all old debts, men could not with more avidity have run on contracting new ones. How small a pittance of the produce of the years 1783, 4 and 5, altho' amounting to upwards of 400,000 l. sterling a year, on an average, hath been applied toward lessening old burdens? Hence it was that men not compelled by law to part with the produce of these years, for the payment of their debts, employed it to gain a further credit in new purchases to several times the amount, and thereby forced an exportation of it to foreign parts, at a price which the markets of consumption would not bear—what then was the consequence?—the merchants were driven to the exportation of gold and silver, which so rapidly followed, and with it fled the vital spirit of the government:—a diminution of the value of the capital, as well as the annual produce of estates, in consequence of the fallen price,—the loss of public credit, and the most alarming deficiencies in the revenue, and in the collection of the taxes; the recovery of new debts, as well as old in effect suspended, while the numerous bankruptcies which have happened in Europe, amongst the merchants trading to America, the reproach of which is cast upon us, have proclaimed to all the trading nations to guard against our laws and policy, and even against our moral principles.

The governor's message to the general assembly on September 26, 1785, called attention to the calamitous state of affairs existing: money scarce, men unable to pay their debts, and citizens liable to fall prey to aliens. The House at once appointed a committee of fifteen members on the state of the republic. In the open debate which this large committee held on September 28, several remedies for the shortage of money were proposed: one by Ralph Izard on behalf of conservatives, that the importation of negro slaves be prohibited for three years and the community thereby saved from the constant drain of capital which it was suffering; others by radical representatives for the more obvious but more short-sighted recourse to stay-laws and paper money.²⁵ The assembly at this session adopted the proposal of paper money, and authorized its issue to the amount of £100,000, to be loaned to citizens, on security, for five years at seven per cent.²⁶

²⁵ *Charleston Evening Gazette*, September 26 and 28, 1785.

²⁶ Act of October 12, 1785, in Cooper and McCord, *S. C. Statutes at Large*, IV. 712-716.

Next spring, the depression had grown even more severe. Many Charleston merchants had gone out of business and the rent of shops had fallen one-third.²⁷ Commodore Gillon, a member for Charleston, proposed in February, 1786, a stay-law, granting debtors three years in which to meet obligations, and exempting them from sheriffs' sales meanwhile. After long debate this bill passed the House, but it was apparently defeated in the Senate. In December Gillon stood for re-election, and was returned as twenty-eighth in the list of thirty representatives from the Charleston parishes.²⁸ In February, 1787, Gillon reintroduced his bill for a stay-law, and gave warning that if it were not enacted, something more radical might be expected. Dr. Ramsay, in opposition, denied the right of the legislature to interfere in private contracts, and said that the experiments which South Carolina had already made in stay-laws had shown that they promoted irresponsibility and did no substantial good. He declined to believe that the people would become tumultuous if the bill should fail to pass. Mr. John Julius Pringle Speaker of the House, advocated the bill, stating that the voice of the people was so strenuous in its favor that it would not be sound policy to reject it. The bill passed the committee of the whole house by a large majority,²⁹ and was enacted. Other debates on phases of the same question occurred in 1788, which further widened the rift between conservatives and radicals.³⁰

The industrial depression continued for several years longer, until in the middle nineties the development of the cotton industry, beginning with the introduction of the sea-island variety in 1786 in Georgia and two or three years later in South Carolina, and hastened and immensely enlarged in its possibilities by Whitney's invention of the short-staple gin, in 1793, brought a renewal of general prosperity. To illustrate the situation of numerous planters during the hard times, a letter is extant from Joseph Bee to a creditor, October 19, 1789.³¹

²⁷ Letter of John Lloyd, then president of the Senate of South Carolina, to T. B. Smith, April 15, 1786. MS. in the Charleston Library.

²⁸ His vote was 203, as against 426 for David Ramsay and Edward Rutledge, at the head of the poll, 422 for C. C. Pinckney, 413 for Thomas Pinckney, and similar votes for other conservative gentry. *Charleston Morning Post*, December 5, 1786.

²⁹ *Charleston Morning Post*, February 19, 1787. Act of March 28, 1787, in Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, V. 36-38.

³⁰ Debates on this subject, in the autumn session of the legislature, may be found in the *Charleston City Gazette or Daily Advertiser*, October 23, 1788.

³¹ MS. among the Gibbes papers, owned by the Gibbes family, Columbia, S. C.

It has been my misfortune, among several hundreds to have been sued and even to have had Judgements obtained against me, in consequence of which I find the sheriff has a very valuable plantation of mine to be sold, which I at sundry times endeavoured to do, both at Public and Private Sale in order to satisfy my Creditors, but all my endeavour proved fruitless, therefore it would be needless for me in such a case to ask a Friend the favour, as I might naturally expect a Denial, therefore I would just leave the matter to yourself to act in whatever way you think proper, tho at the same time I could most heartily wish that I could command money in order to close the matter, as it gives me pain to be dunned at any time. . . .

Bee finally announced in the public prints, June, 1784, that having been reduced to poverty through the sale of his real estate by the sheriff for a thirteenth part of what he might formerly have had for it at private sale, he was now prepared to go to jail to convince his creditors—after which he hoped to be left in some peace of mind.

The assembly in 1791 provided for the gradual calling in of the loans made to the citizens under the act of 1785 and for the retirement of the paper money.³² But in the following years measures occasionally prevailed for delaying the redemption; and there was almost constantly a dread among the conservatives that the radicals might again get the upper hand and, if unchecked by state or federal constitutions, do great mischief to the commonwealth.

Local concerns, however, were overshadowed after 1787 by problems directly connected with federal relations and policy, while in some cases, such as those of paper money, tariff and public debt, the former local problems were quickly handed over to the central government. It was quite natural under the circumstances, that the political factions which had grown into existence while the state government was managing nearly all of the public business should continue in life, and, after a brief period of transition and partial reorganization, should transfer the general application of their points of view and predilections to the affairs of the federal government.

The need of more efficient central control in the United States had been felt by the Carolina planters immediately upon the ending of the British war. An expression of this, for example, was a pamphlet attributed with probable justice to Christopher Gadsden.³³

³² Act of February 19, 1791, in Cooper and McCord, *Statutes at Large*, V. 166-167.

³³ *Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution*. . . . The lower half of the title-page of the copy in the Charleston Library is torn off and missing. The pamphlet was apparently written in 1783 or 1784.

The author of this expressed gratification at the successful close of the American revolt, and urged the advisability of preserving peace. To this end he thought firm government necessary, and especially sound policy in finance.³⁴ Congress, he said, must be trusted with the power of securing supplies for the expenses of the Confederation and the power of contracting debts, and "this power must not be capable of being defeated by the opposition of any minority in the States"; everything depends upon the preservation of a firm political union, "and such a union cannot be preserved without giving all possible weight and energy to the authority of that delegation which constitutes the Union". In conclusion, to drive home his contention, he pictured the consequences to be expected if the policy were not adopted. He lamented the rise of clashing interests,³⁵ and foreboded that in the absence of any strong central control these would break the union, and in that event the whole work of the Revolution would miscarry, the movement for liberty in all future efforts would be discouraged, and the present epoch would but open a new scene of human degeneracy and wretchedness.

In 1784 the Charleston newspapers from time to time advocated strengthening the Union, on general principles, and in 1785 they regretted New York's veto of the plan to empower Congress to levy import duties. Concrete local developments promoted nationalism especially among the planters. To improve their method of rice culture they were abandoning the earlier system of irrigating their fields from reservoirs of rain-water, and were clearing and embanking great tracts of river swamps which could be flooded and drained at will through the rise and fall of the tide.³⁶ For this work they needed large supplies of capital on loan and they were embarrassed by its dearth. The financial crisis of 1785 forced the planters, and the merchants also, to face the situation squarely and to realize that the achievement of political independence by the United States had not made South Carolina financially self-sufficient. It made them see that economically their commonwealth was still in a colonial condition, in need of steady backing by some strong financial power. England was no longer available; but they saw that the Northern commercial states could be made a substitute. At the same time it was seen that a political alliance with the Northern conservative interests would partly safeguard the Carolina conservatives from injury in case the radicals should locally get

³⁴ *Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution*, p. 18.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³⁶ Cf. Mrs. St. Julien Ravenel, *Life and Times of William Lowndes*, pp. 22, 23. AM. HIST. REV., VOL. XIV.—35.

into control. On the whole in this period the conservatives of the Charleston district appear to have dreaded the rule of their local opponents as the worst of threatening evils, and to have welcomed the restriction of the state's functions in large part because it would reduce the scope of the possible damage to be wrought by the radicals in their midst in case they should capture the state machinery. For a number of years, therefore, most of the leading planters on the coast, and many of the merchants, not only favored the remodelling of the central government as accomplished in 1787-1789, but favored also the exercise of broad powers by Congress under the Constitution.

In the years 1786-1788, even the radicals of the Charleston district largely approved the strengthening of the Union, partly perhaps because they saw that commerce depended upon efficient government, and partly because some of their leaders, notably the brilliant young Charles Pinckney,³⁷ had ambition for careers in national affairs. The South Carolina delegates in the Federal Convention, all of whom were from the Charleston vicinity, all favored the new Constitution; nearly all of the lowland members of the state legislature in 1788 voted for the call of a state convention with power to ratify it; and in that convention the delegation from Charleston voted solidly *aye* upon the motion to ratify. For the time, therefore, at least upon the question of federal relations, the Charleston factions were largely at peace. Commodore Gillon, for example, in the debate in the House of Representatives found himself an ally of C. C. Pinckney and David Ramsay.³⁸

The opposition to the federal plan of 1787 came from the distant interior of the state, but as its chief spokesman found one of the aristocratic conservatives of the coast, in the person of Rawlins Lowndes. The uplanders had had experience within the state of living under a government which, by reason of their having a minority in the legislature, they could not control; and they dreaded a similar arrangement in the federal system. Lowndes, also, was impressed with the prospective danger that a coalition of northern interests might use the federal machinery for the oppression of South Carolina with her peculiar needs; and he pleaded with his fellow slaveholding planters to adopt his view, but without success.

³⁷ Not to be confused with General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, who like his brother Thomas was a conservative and a Federalist. To distinguish him from his cousin Charles Cotesworth, Charles Pinckney was nicknamed "Black-guard Charlie" by the conservatives.

³⁸ J. Elliot, *Debates*, third ("second") ed., IV. 253-317.

Lowndes was not even elected to the state convention. In his absence Patrick Dollard from the interior was the sole spokesman of the opposition to the ordinance. He said:³⁹

My constituents are highly alarmed at the large and rapid strides which this new government has taken towards despotism. They say it is big with political mischiefs and pregnant with a greater variety of impending woes to the good people of the Southern States, especially South Carolina, than all the plagues supposed to issue from the box of Pandora. They say it is particularly calculated for the meridian of despotic aristocracy; that it evidently tends to promote the ambitious views of a few able and designing men, and enslave the rest.

The coast delegates were solidly deaf to this declaration, as they had been to Lowndes's arguments, though some of them, patricians and plebeians, were destined after a short experience under the new government to reverse their position and champion the doctrines which they now rejected.

ULRICH B. PHILLIPS.

³⁹ Elliot, *Debates*, IV. 336-338.